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SUBJECT: DELHI DIARY, MARCH 29-APRIL 11

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Classified By: PolCouns Ted Osius for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

11. (C) Below is a compilation of political highlights from Embassy New Delhi for March 8-29, 2007 that did not feature in our other reporting, including:

- Naxalites Looking to Join the Fray in Kashmir
- BJP Coalesces Its Strategy of Attack on Congress
- Civil Society Holds SAARC Accountable On Trafficking
- Japan - SAARC's Role in Tempering Iran
- Japan Positive on U.S.-India-Japan-Australia Dialogue

Naxalites Looking to Join the Fray in Kashmir

12. (SBU) The Naxalites are reportedly expanding their operations to Kashmir as they perceive Pakistani support for armed insurgency to be decreasing. One recent article by terrorism expert Ajai Sahni alleges that a Naxalite "leading team" has visited the region with the intention of creating a permanent party structure. According to a recent piece in the BJP-friendly "Pioneer," Naxalite heads have specifically met with Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba leaders on a number of occasions to discuss the Naxalites, support for the right to self-determination by the Kashmiris, who constitute an &oppressed nationality8 in the Naxalite doctrine. By combining their &class struggle8 agenda with a strong push for self-determination, the Naxalites may indeed win their own support base. Kashmir would also provide the Naxalites an opportunity to weaken government control over yet another troubled state. According to the Pioneer article, unnamed officials at the Ministry of Home Affairs believe the Naxalites could share effective mining techniques with Kashmiri terrorists, who have lobbied the Naxalites to open &shops8 in the valley.

BJP Coalesces Its Strategy of Attack on Congress

¶3. (SBU) The media reports that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) plans to accuse Congress and its UPA coalition government of taking "dictation" from the U.S. on internal security and foreign policy and being "soft" on terror. The BJP hopes that this one-two punch will create rising momentum in the Uttar Pradesh (UP) polls and lead the party to victory in the 2009 national elections.

¶4. (C) The BJP expects its portrayal of the UPA as "subservient" to the U.S will convince Muslim voters to reject Congress appeals. The BJP also hopes to plant seeds of doubt among the urban middle class that Congress can ensure national security. To accomplish its goals, the BJP will assert that UPA policy towards Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir, and the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal are dictated by the U.S. The BJP additionally plans to accuse Congress of failing to address the terrorism of Naxalites and the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). In coming months, the BJP will accuse the UPA of failing to stop "illegal infiltration" from Bangladesh and Nepal, pass a strong anti-terror law, address the growing strength of Maoists and ULFA, and block efforts to entertain the demilitarization of Jammu and Kashmir, in order to buoy their case that the UPA is incapable of providing internal security.

Civil Society Holds SAARC Accountable on Trafficking

¶5. (SBU) Once again, civil society has taken the lead in promoting social justice. Media reports that several civil society organizations have called upon member SAARC countries to strengthen mechanisms to combat trafficking. The Indian Network of Combating Trafficking, ATSEC Bangladesh, the South Asia Partnership International, and Bachpan Bachao Andolan all urged the existing SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking Women and Children for Prostitution⁸

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be adequately implemented. While no task force was mandated by the Convention, the NGOs have asked for their respective host governments to develop standardized regulations to rescue trafficked minors and ensure smooth repatriation system for rescued victims. India still has a long way to go to prevent trafficking, but this is another step in the right direction.

Japan - SAARC's Role in Tempering Iran

¶6. (C) Japanese director of Policy Coordination in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Nobukatsu Kanehara told PolOff he thought the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Summit, held in New Delhi April 3-4 with Japan and the U.S. as observers, had been productive. It was good that India had been open to inviting others, he said, noting that India was the most stable democracy in the organization. Kanehara expressed disappointment that the U.S. had endeavored to be a part of SAARC, but had rejected Japan's invitation to join the East Asia Summit (EAS). PolOff noted that SAARC's acceptance of Iran as an observer might make a difference in how SAARC was viewed in the future. Kanehara responded that it would be difficult to persuade Iran to drop its nuclear aspirations, and that Prime Minister Koizumi had told Iran's Foreign Minister Mottaki previously that Iran was headed for self-destruction. Kanehara suggested that SAARC nations should speak as one voice and use their relationship with Iran to tell Tehran that it was ruining itself and should cool off.⁸ The SAARC members could try to convince Iran that it was not in Iran's, or the SAARC nations', interest for Iran to possess nuclear weapons. If Iran's friends speak, Iran should listen,⁸ theorized Kanehara. This is consistent with a statement by Mitsuo Sakaba, Director General for press and public relations in Japan's MOFA, who reportedly said, "regional cooperation in SAARC involving Iran can help in the development and democratization of Iran." Kanehara observed

that the government of Iran did not think it could be seen as an important power without nuclear weapons, and underlined that this was certainly misguided.

Japan Positive on U.S.-India-Japan-Australia Dialogue

17. (C) Kanehara said he thought major democracies should speak with a strong voice, and that a quadrilateral dialogue among Japan, the U.S., India and Australia could robustly engage in cooperation on intelligence, security, national disasters and counterterrorism. He asserted four-party talks could be used to show China that it is welcome in what he termed a &house of freedom.8

18. (C) Kanehara noted that PM Abe was planning to meet President Bush at the end of April, adding that Washington's interest appeared to be peaked by Abe,s "new multi-lateralism."
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